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CHILD CARE IN ISRAEL

ITS SOCIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND*

by

Dr. C. FRANKENSTEIN

Since the beginning of the Zionist movement and the migration of Jews to Palestine, public life in the Jewish sector of the country has always been characterized by its strong emphasis on child care. This emphasis has grown steadily in intensity during the last seventeen years, with the absorption of the many thousands of European children who started to come at the advent of Hitler to power in Germany, and, in the last two years, with the "repatriation movement" of tens of thousands of families from countries throughout the world.

By the end of 1949, there were in Israel some 340,000 Jews under the age of 18 (approximately 34% of the Jewish population); of these, every third had been born abroad, more than 92% of the foreign-born were in the country less than five years, more than 87% of them had come in the 18 months since the establishment of the State. Most of the immigrants came from the camps in Europe and in Cyprus, from the Balkans, North-Africa, Turkey and the Yemen: in other words, most of them were suffering either from the after-effects of war and Nazi persecution or from the lack of adequate physical and cultural training. More than two thirds of the settled inhabitants under 18 are to be found in urban districts.

These few figures may give a first indication of the extent of the problem which today faces the Government of the young State, its local authorities and voluntary agencies, its educators and doctors, nurses and social workers, its planners of social insurance and legislation.

But before entering into an analysis of the sociological and psychological elements of the present complexities of child care in Israel, we

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must, at least briefly, discuss the development of social services in Palestine under the rule of the Mandatory Government prior to the establishment of the State of Israel.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN PALESTINE

It has often been said that there was in the British administration a marked tendency to look upon the inhabitants of Palestine as "natives" and to adopt the attitude of a typical colonial government doing little, if anything, to develop initiative and a sense of social responsibility among the local inhabitants. It is indeed a fact that only insignificant financial contributions were made by the Government towards the costs of health, welfare and education services (less than 10% of the total Mandatory budget in 1935 and slightly more than 7% in 1945), and that the Jews benefited but little from these small amounts: in 1945 the governmental allocations for the three social services in the Jewish sector amounted to less than 5% of the total Jewish expenditure on these services.

One of the reasons for this apparent lack of interest on the part of the administration in the development of social services was, curiously enough, the fact that the Jewish population had taken the initiative in establishing its own services, on a voluntary basis, without legal backing and financed almost entirely from local Jewish sources and contributions made by world Jewry. These services, as well as the high cultural level of most Jewish immigrants from Europe and the cultural and economic development which was motivated, nourished and maintained by the collective will to rebuild a nation, resulted in the attainment by the majority of the Jewish population of a considerably higher standard of living than that of the majority of the Arab inhabitants.

The British Government claimed they were committed to bridge the gap between the Jewish and the Arab standards and, consequently, had to concentrate their efforts on the upbuilding and maintenance of basic social services in the Arab sector; the Arabs in general, however, showed little readiness to respond to the Government's efforts or to take over responsibility for the services. As a result progress remained slow and the gap was neither bridged nor even narrowed. This again caused increased concentration of the Government's efforts on the Arab sector and a constant decrease of governmental support of the Jewish services.

On the other hand, no community can establish and maintain adequate health, education and welfare services without the help of

governmental sources of income. Voluntary taxation and contributions can never yield enough funds for all the hospitals, clinics, infant welfare centers, kindergartens, schools, clubs, playgrounds, children's institutions, homes for the aged, asylums, and for comprehensive public assistance and insurance schemes so vitally important in a modern society. It is all the more noteworthy that the Jewish community of Palestine succeeded in building up a network of schools which served 96% of all school children; a medical service based both on the voluntary insurance of about 70% of the working population (in the Sick Fund of the General Labour Federation and other public insurance associations) and on the activity of the Hadassah Medical Organization and other voluntary agencies; a network of local welfare bureaux organized and supervised by the Social Welfare Department of the General Council of Palestine Jews (the Vaad Leumi); hundreds of children's homes of different types, established mainly by the women's organizations and other voluntary agencies; a central department for the maintenance and education of immigrant children; an effective unemployment insurance scheme based on voluntary contributions by the members of the General Labour Federation; a number of emergency relief schemes, and many other services.

When we say that these services were inadequate we have in mind three main deficiencies: the quantitative inadequacy of basic relief to needy families and of institutional care for the chronically ill (two functions which *must* be State functions); the inadequacy of trained personnel which could not be made available as quickly as it was needed for the ever expanding services; and the qualitative deficiencies resulting from the fact that these very voluntary agencies on whose efforts so much depended, developed their activities in competition rather than in cooperation and coordination.

The background of historical events must be considered when evaluating the development of Jewish social services in Palestine: the fifteen years prior to the establishment of the State were years of uninterrupted conflict and strife, disturbances, depressions and wars; Hitler came to power, German Jewry immigrated *en masse*; the Arabs reacted and the disturbances started which lasted almost three years; the British Government decided to close the doors of Palestine to Jewish immigrants; tension between the Jews and the British officials grew. The war broke out; twice, the enemy was dangerously close to the frontiers of the country, European Jewry was doomed and almost every Jew in Palestine suffered personal losses. And then began the tragic

shaped of Displaced Persons' Camps, "illegal" immigration, detention in Cyprus, the more or less open fight between the Jews and the British Administration, entailing the disruption of normal life in towns and villages; and finally the invasion of the Arab armies and the War of Liberation. And it was in these years of disturbances and war that social services came into being — many born out of emergency — at first of a provisional character and only later consolidated and developed into permanent structures.

This, then, was the heritage the State of Israel received from the Mandatory period and the haphazard social services set up through voluntary efforts. It is obvious that many organizational, financial and functional deficiencies will have to be eliminated before the system will function adequately, one of the major problems being that of coordinating governmental and voluntary efforts. But what was built in previous years not only constitutes the basis but also the dynamic "field of forces" for the rapid development of the social services which are of such vital importance for the absorption of the masses of immigrants arriving daily.

In the following analysis we shall confine ourselves to a discussion of three major factors which determine the direction of child care in Israel: the "climate of tension" in a country and within a nation being built and shaped by immigration and the influence of this "climate" on the immigrant child; the problem of the Oriental Jews and their relationships with the European sector; the direct and indirect influences of religious tradition on education and legislation. We shall then proceed to a description of the various services and their respective role in the total program of individualized treatment.

THE CLIMATE OF TENSION

One determining factor in the scene of child care is structurally connected with the basic fact that Israel, as a country of immigration, is a country of tensions and divergencies. We know, of course, from the experience of every country of immigration, that the influx of a substantial number of immigrants from different countries is bound to result in the formation of ethnical sub-groups which tend to preserve their individual traditions, modes of life and behaviour patterns; it is known, too, that the very existence of different sub-groups is the direct or indirect cause of tensions, lack of unity, and often hinders the process of individual adaptation and integration. It is probably correct to form-

ulate a socio-psychological law by saying that the smaller the total community receiving the immigrants and the greater the number of ethnical sub-groups in relation to the total population, the higher the tensions ensuing from the co-existence of a variety of immigrant groups within a community. Be that as it may, this is precisely the situation obtaining in Israel. Not only the Oriental, but also the European communities differ from each other in many respects. In addition, we are faced with a variety of differences and opposites which do not exist to the same extent in other countries. Israelis for whom the fact that they are Israelis is as natural and unproblematic as it is for Frenchmen to be French, and Zionists who *went* to become Israelis but who have to go through a rather slow and often complicated process of reorientation; citizens who are aware of their collective responsibility for the up-building of the country and citizens who are individualistic and indifferent to any collective call; immigrants who in previous years had come after more or less prolonged and thorough preparation in their countries of origin or departure and immigrants who now arrive unprepared for life in Israel; ideologically diverse groups; orthodox and non-orthodox; -- all these and many other divergencies add to the "climate of tension". On the other hand, the reality of Israel is that of a community in the making, by definition a community of immigrants, an organism living on the constant intake of newcomers and therefore naturally prepared to change and to be changed by such influx of new elements. Its ultimate aim, its essential purpose is the formation of national unity, the term "formation" meaning both process and activity. Thus, the reality of Israel is made up of sociologically and psychologically contradictory elements; it is the country of instability *kat'exohen*, but at the same time the country in which instability constitutes one of the structural elements and one of the main dynamic forces of development.

What does this mean for our youth and particularly for the immigrant youth? As long as an immigrant child, in his adaptation process, is supported by adequately functioning parents or substitute parents, there is reasonable hope that this process will be smooth and straight. The constructive forces which are at work in the community, its basic ideas and ideals as well as its exigencies and problems mould the developing ego-structure jointly with, and intensified by, the emotional pattern of a normal child-parent relationship. In such cases it makes little difference to what extent the parents themselves are successful in their adaptation to the new environment. But, where the child-parent relationship is not sound and normal, be it due to lack of under-

standing and flexibility on the part of the parents, be it as the result of what could be called their own adaptation neurosis (which has many different manifestations),—then the child is driven either into reactive aggressiveness and maladjustment or into an attitude of impersonal identification with collective values. This latter result is of particular interest to us because it is a specific form of development characteristic of our youth. There are among our native and immigrant youth many that make excellent adjustment to their group, particularly if it is a politically oriented youth movement; they may even become responsible leaders and certainly are prepared to accept group discipline, to do their job without question, to sacrifice themselves if necessary. On the other hand, their social attitude is often marked by a certain lack of personal warmth, and they are deficient in empathy: their group understanding is confined to that of their own restricted group and they have great difficulty in comprehending the needs of other groups and particularly those of the less well-adjusted individual, the underprivileged, the socially maladjusted, the handicapped.

Then there is the problem of children and adolescents who have come to Israel in recent years from the camps of Europe. The difficulties experienced by Youth Aliyah workers*, the numerous manifestations of neurotic behaviour are dealt with by individual psychological treatment or by the removal of a child to a special therapeutic institution. These behaviour phenomena demand constant revision in the educational program of Youth Aliyah and in the training of its instructors and teachers. Moreover, there is a very real need for more widespread and skilful employment of trained case workers. We are faced here with a tremendously complex and difficult task, but one that will, one can be sure, be tackled by the people who are actively engaged in Youth Aliyah work. Another problem is that of adolescents who have behind them a past of nearly uninterrupted frustration, who have never had a chance to lead a normal life. In the minds of many of them, any form of collective society, be it even an ideally organized one, merely evokes the association of camp life and is therefore rejected. They want to be independent, to live on their own, to be their own masters — although they are often far from being prepared for such independence, either mentally, socially or vocationally. This craving must be respected

* "Aliyah" means "immigration". Youth Aliyah is the name of the department of the Jewish Agency which is responsible for the maintenance and education of many thousands of immigrant children and youth.

despite the tremendous organizational and economic difficulties involved. Herein lies a great opportunity for constructive social work in which psychiatric, vocational, educational and relief activities can be merged. These adolescents are in desperate need of training, both scholastic and vocational, of work, of friendship and normal contacts, of opportunities for self-expression and, equally important, of supervised aggression. It may well be that some of them will then, after a time, become able to accept the ideals of collective living which most of our educators and social workers as well as the community at large have always considered the driving force and the essential content of education, rehabilitation and social adaptation.

But the validity of these ideals as instruments of education and treatment may be questioned from still another angle. In previous years the emphasis of child care services for immigrant children had been on the up-bringing of thousands of orphans or children whose parents had remained abroad; today, however, the emphasis has shifted to the care of children who have come with their families. Most of the younger children continue to live with their families, while a large proportion of the older ones are being taken care of by Youth Aliyah. Now, while it is accepted that special attention must be given to the physical, emotional, educational and vocational needs of the immigrant *child* (whose adaptation to the realities of the new country will, it is hoped, have a positive influence on that of his parents as well), child care workers are today faced with the problem of integrating all treatment services with *family* case work in the broadest sense of the term. Never before have they been so keenly aware of the importance of such integration: unless constant and continued effort is made to interpret the various treatment services to the parents, little if any positive results can be achieved, even if the children are adequately assisted in their individual adjustment process. On the contrary, there exists the very real danger of estranging the child from his parents unless they are made to understand the social meaning of the values governing child treatment services in Israel. And unless they are made not only to *understand* the implications of these services but also to *cooperate* with them, resistance, negativistic attitudes and resentments are bound to come into play which it will be extremely difficult to overcome, and a schism is likely to develop between two "camps": the constructive and progressive elements on one side against the uncooperative and—finally—maladjusted elements on the other.

Such, then, is the climate of tension characteristic of the State of Israel and its social services. Another nation, less accustomed to dynamic

social existence than the Jews in Israel, or less conscious of their intrinsic problems, would perhaps be fearful of the magnitude and complexity of the task which faces this young community; but for the Jews the challenge is not frightening; they know from the long and bitter experience of their past that it is this very tension, the very immensity of the problem, which supplies the drive, the spur to creative development and constructive solution. Synthesis, as process and as action, has always been and will always be the essence of the Jewish State and its philosophy.

THE ORIENTAL JEWS

Over 30% of all Jews in Israel belong to the Sephardic community or to one of the many Oriental groups (Yemenite, Persian, Bukharan, Kurdish, Turkish, Iraqi, Syrian and Moroccan Jews, to mention only the main Oriental groups) and are thus mainly of non-European origin. Oriental Jews have, at least in previous years, shown a marked inclination to settle in urban areas without, however, being prepared to make a full adjustment to the complicated structure of urban civilization. As a result, they constitute today a large part of the population of slum quarters. The average birth-rate among Oriental Jews is nearly twice that of European Jews. Due to improved conditions of hygiene and general health, child mortality is extremely low in the whole country. This then explains the fact that the percentage of Oriental children in the total child population is considerably higher than the percentage of Orientals in the total population.

The Oriental Jewish communities are, as a rule, relatively backward in their mode of life, in social and educational structure. They are therefore in much greater need of such public social services as may be made available by the community than are the European Jews. Jews of European origin are better prepared to help themselves because they have, generally speaking, been brought up under conditions favouring the development of personal initiative and understanding of the social implications of modern civilization. In fact, it is this cleavage between modern civilization as represented in Israel by the European population, and their own backwardness that is responsible for the potent and acute danger of social maladjustment for some of the Orientals. This is particularly true of the Oriental children. They stand, as it were, between two realities. They strive to take part in the social life of the European majority but, at the same time, are insufficiently supported by their often all too primitive parents to grow organically into the general set-up of the community. Thus their ego development is often

arrested by resentment and by a strong feeling of frustration which cause aggressiveness, strengthen their emotional affectivity and weaken their ability to take part in productive activities. Their own ethnical group-setting is too weak, from the point of view both of numerical strength and cultural development, to act as a collective force and to help build a creative collective consciousness. They are, therefore, often left in what has rightly been termed a social vacuum. Social workers in Israel are fully aware of the need, arising out of this peculiar situation, for intensive social and educational intervention for Oriental children and accordingly concentrate most of their effort upon them.

This need becomes even more comprehensible when the socio-psychological structure of the Oriental family is borne in mind. The family unit in Oriental Jewish communities is often either disrupted as the result of the impact of divergent social forces upon it or is too rigid to function as a normal center of guidance and directive for the younger generation; the youth is, therefore, in need of supplementary guidance and directives provided by outside agencies. In this connection, the social as well as educational capacity of the Oriental family must be considered. It has already been said that a large proportion of Oriental Jews are the inhabitants of our slum areas which are characterized by terrible overcrowding, poor sanitation and dire lack of space for expansion or even for recreational facilities. An investigation made some years ago into housing conditions in the slums of Jerusalem revealed that 74% of the families lived in one room, 26% in two rooms. The average number of persons per room in one-room dwellings was 5.4, in two room dwellings 3.1. The total average was 4.8 persons per room. We are faced here with the serious problem of the interrelation of social conditions and psychological make-up; on the one hand, there can be no doubt that slum conditions are, at least partly, the immediate result of the general indolence and passivity of many Oriental Jews, who are not prepared to take the initiative needed in order to improve their standard of living; on the other hand, the existing slum conditions make it increasingly difficult for many of the Oriental families to muster sufficient mental energies to meet their children's emotional and educational needs. And again, the vicious circle of frustration, aggressiveness, maladjustment and more frustration is bound to set in unless outside forces are mobilized to break it.

One of the most serious results of the rigid attitude of many Orientals towards social values is the relative frequency of educational incompetence and lack of attention to proper schooling.

480

| | |
|------|-----|
| 74 | 26 |
| 54 | 31 |
| 296 | 26 |
| 370 | 78 |
| 3996 | 806 |
| 800 | |
| 802 | |

It is therefore no mere accident that the problem of unschooled children which, until the recently enacted compulsory education law, was one of the major concerns of social workers, was largely identical with that of Oriental children: practically all children who did not attend schools or who attended utterly inadequate religious schools only, came from Oriental families, as did most of the children who left school before completing the fifth grade. It is safe to say that 25% of all Oriental children received no adequate training. This picture, it is true, has changed and every child is now compelled by law to go through at least a full elementary school course. In addition, a network of evening schools is being established intended mainly for native and immigrant adolescents and young adults who have heretofore had little or no opportunity for adequate schooling.

On the other hand, however, the number of Oriental parents who lack understanding of modern educational values is continuously increasing as the result of immigration from culturally backward areas. The educator and the social worker are therefore called upon to deal not only with problems of organization and finance but also, and mainly, with problems of adapting the curriculum and methods of teaching to pupils of widely divergent mentalities, of educating parents, and of counteracting the destructive influence of insufficient schooling on the process of social adjustment. For a long time to come, child care workers in Israel will have to content themselves with more or less partial solutions, as the process of educating the parents is a slow and difficult one.

This short analysis of the problem of Oriental Jews would, however, be incomplete unless we mention that a large number of them have fully succeeded in their social, economic and cultural adaptation to the reality of Israel and that many are playing a leading role in the social services and other areas of public life.

The problem of the Oriental Jews is not one of ethnic constitution or "racial" difference, but solely one of social and educational development and action. Common experiences — in school, at work, in youth movements, in army service, in political groups, and in personal contacts — make for amalgamation of ethnic sub-groups; they persist as separate and divergent entities only when the community as a whole, and its progressive elements in particular, fails to realize that the *process* of amalgamation can and must be accelerated by consciously planned, educational and organizational *action*. Insufficient attention was paid in the past by the European majority to the Oriental minority,

which fact may, at least in part, account for the slow process of acculturation of many Orientals. But reality is changing this attitude, as the influx of Jews from Oriental countries increases and with it, the opportunity for inter-group contacts and experiences.

RELIGIOUS TRADITION AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION AND LEGISLATION

A third factor whose direct and indirect influence permeates all phases of planning and execution of child care is Jewish historical tradition and the contradiction between its religious and its secularized interpretation. Religious learning and its evaluation as the focal point of Jewish life for many generations has had a fourfold effect on the present-day educational scene in Israel:

(1) a marked tendency toward intellectualization and moralization and towards emphasizing conscious and rational values — a tendency which appears in both the religious and secular trends of education;

(2) a strong identification with religious tradition and the historical past of the Jewish people, with emphasis on the theological interpretation of historic values in the religious trends and on evolutionary interpretation of theological values in the secular trends of education;

(3) the emergence of diverse and mutually exclusive trends in the education system and the resulting duplication of services;

(4) the impact of tradition on child legislation and the tendency toward adapting the traditional laws to the requirements of legislation in a modern society.

Emphasis on learning, on intellectual achievements and on moral evaluations is most evident in the traditional philosophy of education of the orthodox groups which, until the establishment of the State, represented about 15% of the population. But its influence goes far beyond the boundaries of these groups. It reappears in secular education as a tendency toward strengthening the conscious identification with lofty spiritual and moral values, both in the area of scholastic instruction and of group education (although it should be added that the development of aesthetic appreciation as well as of physical fitness is receiving more and more attention).

Identification with tradition and with the historic past stems, in the religious trend, from the messianic belief in the special function of

the Jewish people as the executor of an eternal truth. Observance of traditionally established precepts therefore becomes a means of maintaining the order of the universe and of fulfilling the meaning of history toward its messianic goal. On the other hand, we are witnessing a re-interpretation of the historic past of the Jewish people (including its religious content) under the influence of Zionist and Socialist ideologies. This process has led to a full secularization of Jewish tradition with strong emphasis on the character of the Jewish nation as a natural entity comparable to all other nations. The concept of the nation and its reality of structure and function is, in these secular trends, definitely naturalistic, and observance of religious precepts is consequently considered unnecessary or even prejudicial to the desirable process of integrating and absorbing the values and achievements of modern culture into the development of the Jewish nation. It is inevitable that this divergence of views should create antagonistic camps particularly in the area of education.

There are today four main trends in public Jewish education: General Zionist, Labour, Mizrahi and Agudath Israel. The first two encompass slightly less than three quarters of the total school population, the last two slightly more than one quarter. In the chapter on Education in Israel we shall try to explain the ideological differences in these trends. Here, we wish only to mention the fact that the co-existence of ideologically divergent groups in education is bound to complicate the organizational task with which our authorities are faced and that duplication of services is not always avoidable under such conditions. There are many advocates of a unified system of education, but the discussion is still far from concluded.

The last problem which arises out of an analysis of Jewish tradition in relation to child care is that of its impact on child legislation. Since the beginning of the Mandatory rule in Palestine, the laws relating to personal status have always been those of the respective religious communities (Jews, Moslems and the different Christian denominations). This principle is still maintained in Israel. Adoption, guardianship, illegitimacy and legitimation, maintenance and similar matters are therefore regulated by religious law which of course requires interpretation in the light of the needs of a modern complex society. There are many advocates of a purely secular legislation based on the eclectic use of the progressive laws of other countries; but today the influence of their opponents in the orthodox religious camp is strong enough to maintain the *status quo*; still others argue for synthesizing the tradi-

tional law with modern ideas by way of re-interpreting the former. It need not be elaborated why and how the postponement of a final decision has a hindering effect on the development of certain social services.

CHILD CARE SERVICES AND PROBLEMS

Education, health and welfare workers in Israel are coming more and more to recognize the vital importance of adapting methods of child care to the new conditions created by mass-immigration, and to supplement the accepted system, with its emphasis on collective values, by case work methods. This basic change is felt in all areas of child care, in maternity and infant welfare, in child guidance, in school social services, in recreational activities, in the treatment of wayward and delinquent youth, in institutional care and in the total treatment scheme of Youth Aliyah groups. But it should be pointed out that the emphasis on individualization of services is still far from being sufficient, and that the process of synthesizing this new trend with the accepted emphasis on group values will take a considerable time to complete.

The importance of maternity and infant welfare services which reach practically all expectant and nursing mothers and infants, goes far beyond that of a health service. Although it is true that, as the result of intensive care, the rate of infant mortality in the period between 1937 and 1947 dropped from 76 to 26 per 1000 infants under supervision in the Oriental sector, and from 32 to 12 in the European, the effect upon the mother, and particularly the Oriental mother, of systematic guidance given by the doctor and the nurse in all matters of feeding, cleaning, clothing and training, cannot be overrated. Such guidance is, in fact, one of the major instruments of social education and acculturation. Efforts are being made to intensify mothercraft training in immigrants' transit camps as well as in day nurseries (in which thousands of children of working mothers are being cared for).

The establishment of a very large number of additional kindergartens and schools to accommodate the ever increasing number of immigrant children requires not only extraordinary budgetary and organizational efforts but also continual training of teachers and constant curriculum planning and revising. The Israel education authorities are fully aware of the fact that much remains to be done in this field. At the same time, efforts are being made by the health and welfare authorities to expand the vital services of the school hygiene depart-

ments and the school social workers, with a view to strengthening the link between school and home.

Another example of a functionally defined service which at the same time serves as an important socio-educational instrument is the school-feeding scheme initiated by Hadassah not only to feed undernourished children, but also to teach cooking, nutrition, hygiene and table manners and thereby to influence the attitudes and habits of the pupils' families.

Summer camps, playgrounds and clubs for school children cannot be regarded as purely recreational activities in Israel where the basic needs of many immigrant children are not being met adequately within their often incompetent family circle. Recreation as an isolated facility has little effect on the social behaviour and development of a child whose fundamental need is orientation in a world for which he is not sufficiently prepared. However, where these facilities are organically linked with the family scene, where the experience gained by the group leader is effectively used in home visits, in frequent and intensive contact with the child's parents and other family members, and where the family is made to understand the meaning and value of recreation — the club, the playground and the summer camp become important instruments of child care and fulfill their function. Here, again, the prevalence of certain collective ideals and values (as accepted in another form of group work which is firmly established in Israel, the politically oriented youth movement) exercises, directly and indirectly, a strong influence on recreational services, and it is therefore by no means easy to introduce the desirable individualized case work approach.

Still another example is that of treatment of waywardness and delinquency among youth. The proportion of maladjusted and delinquent children in Israel is higher than in European countries or in the United States (comparing relatively normal periods); but manifestations of asocial behaviour though probably more polymorphous in Israel are much less extreme than in other countries in which similar studies have been made; and finally, the cases in which anti-social behaviour can be explained as symptom and reactive expression of neurotic conflicts are less frequent than those in which the social conflict plays a major role in causation. The clash between heterogeneous cultural patterns is on the whole of greater etiological importance in the explanation of social maladjustment than the personal equation. This, in turn, explains the emphasis laid on socio-educational group-

work as a remedy rather than on individual treatment for which many of our children are not mentally prepared.

Efforts are being made to develop neighbourhood centers in slum quarters and neglected rural areas: in these centers all children, including the normally adjusted and the maladjusted, are taken care of; educational, recreational and medical services are coordinated and integrated; and the family is considered both object and subject of the comprehensive treatment plan. Several such centers are already in operation, and although it is too early to summarize the results, we would be justified in saying that the potentialities of this method must at least be explored. Neglected, wayward, maladjusted and even delinquent children (with the exception of the most serious cases) can be dealt with in their natural environment, in their own families and habitats, on condition, of course, that we deal with that environment at the same time and this environment is amenable to appropriate social and educational activity. The Orientals who form the bulk of our maladjusted youth suffer, as has already been pointed out, from their social inability to grow organically into that incomprehensible and yet attractive civilization which to them represents the world of higher standards and values. We must, therefore, try to give them a sense of security (the prerequisite of social adjustment) within the very cultural setting that has caused their insecurity. Removal from his (urban) environment (though it may, at least temporarily, appeal to a youngster who is "fed up" with his family) is likely to remain fruitless in case the child returns home after he may have made an excellent adjustment to his institution or his (rural) foster home.

This leads us to the discussion of the two services which supplement, or substitute for, group work in the treatment of problem and maladjusted children: child guidance and foster-care.

In all fields of child care in Israel, the need for more and better equipped child guidance services is strongly felt: the number of available psychiatrists, psychotherapists, psychologists and psychiatric social workers is utterly insufficient to answer the numerous demands for diagnostic and therapeutic services on the part of workers in the field of school social work, Youth Aliyah, group work, probation and institutional care; moreover, methods of psychological testing, diagnosis and therapy have to be adapted to the mentality and the cultural background of the children — a task requiring prolonged research work which has only just been started. As a result of these shortcomings and handicaps, child care workers often have to make treatment decisions

unaided by proper diagnosis, and it is inevitable that in many cases their decisions are inadequate.

It has been argued that the inadequacy of differential diagnosis has a particularly disturbing effect on child placement, that, as a result, many children are being removed from their families unnecessarily while others are being placed before their specific problems and needs are properly recognized. Moreover, the many institutions which are available in the country are not sufficiently well classified, a fact which renders still more difficult differential placement.

But the problem in its entirety cannot be understood unless we analyze the factors which have created and are determining the emphasis laid on institutional care in Israel. The first factor to be borne in mind is the impact on child welfare work in Israel of the continental (European) tradition with its belief in the value of institutional care. Although this attitude has since undergone considerable change in Europe, it is still prevalent among many educators in Israel, some of whom go so far as to see in institutional care the panacea for all social and educational ills. This tendency has another root in the high evaluation of collective ideals and group life characteristic of the philosophy of the pioneers who came to the country as the builders of agricultural settlements and the ideology of the various youth movements in which collective living has always been a driving force and a determining factor. We must also remember that many children's institutions have come into existence (and are still being added every year) to cope with the problem of maintaining thousands of immigrant children from many different cultural backgrounds for whom Youth Aliyah has assumed full responsibility. Then, too, there is to be considered the strong competitive spirit of ideologically oriented groups and agencies which are interested in bringing up the children, and especially the immigrant children, in accordance with their own respective ideologies—a fact which often leads to most unfortunate and unnecessary duplication of educational services, at the same time impeding the development of much required differential placement based on individual diagnosis.

All these facts explain the existence in Israel of an unusually large number of institutions (over 150 with room for more than 11,000 children). Simultaneously it becomes clear why placement of a child in an institution has a completely different meaning in Israel than in other countries in which separation from the family invariably acts as a traumatic experience and where the child is not prepared to accept group life in an institution as "part of the scene".

This analysis would be incomplete, however, without at least passing mention of an organizational peculiarity of our welfare system which has a direct bearing on placement policies:

In 1932, when the Jewish community of Palestine set up its welfare system, a departmental division between family and child care was established. This organizational set-up has been taken over by the Ministry of Welfare and is at present to be found in each local welfare bureau in Israel: the family division is in charge of general relief and the child division is in charge of the placement of children (in day nurseries, kindergartens, clubs, playgrounds, summer camps, institutions and foster families), of medical relief to children, of school-feeding schemes, school social work, treatment of wayward children and, through a separate, centrally organized service, of probation and court work. All these services are carried out, in the larger places at least, by special child care workers who are supervised by the various child care departments of the Ministry of Welfare. They cooperate closely with the health and education authorities and with all the voluntary agencies active in their respective areas.

Now, it is this very division between the two sectors of welfare work, each with its own budget, that leads in some cases to inadequate placement decisions; were the money which is made available for the institutional placement of a child to be used for a comprehensive family treatment plan, the child could perhaps continue to live with his family and would be better served there. Here, as in many other areas of child care, much remains to be done in terms of coordination and over-all planning.

The main problem with which we are faced, and on the solution of which the success of coordination largely depends, is that of introducing and financing adequate public assistance as part of a general social security scheme. Plans for such a comprehensive scheme are under preparation, and it is the hope of all social workers in Israel that the Government, despite its tremendous financial commitments, will find ways and means gradually to carry out these plans. It is their hope that they will then be able to make their treatment decisions without being unduly influenced by purely economic considerations, and to develop co-ordinated case work for children of parents who, owing to their own adjustment and adaptation difficulties, are unable to guide their children properly and are themselves often enough in need of guidance and treatment. Many deficiencies in the present child care system, which are under criticism both by advisors from abroad and the work-

ers in Israel, are the result not of lack of professional knowledge but of the pressure of constantly recurring emergencies.

Another burning problem is that of developing adequate services for the Arab child. The Arabs in Israel, who represent approximately 12% of the total population, live mostly in rural districts. Their children under the age of 15 constitute an unusually high percentage (an estimate of 44% was quoted recently). Very few social services were in existence in these rural areas until the establishment of the State of Israel. Infant welfare centers, medical services, schools, recreational facilities, feeding schemes and social welfare services have, therefore, to be established or extended and intensified. Much remains to be done both in terms of personnel training and of organization. But when evaluating the partial achievements of the past eighteen months, one has to bear in mind not only the political conditions prevailing in the country during that period but also, and mainly, the fact that community initiative and voluntary efforts are extremely weak in the Arab sector of the population. We cannot here analyze the historical, cultural, economic and socio-psychological reasons for this attitude which, nevertheless, is a reality factor of primary importance and of strong influence on the planning of social services for the Arab child.

Child welfare services are being developed, with the help of UNICEF, by the Ministries of Health and Welfare. But first consideration is given to education. A large number of additional schools have already been opened and many Arab teachers are being trained to meet the increasing educational needs of the Arab child. The proportion of children aged 6 to 14 who are attending Government and Mission schools is estimated to be 57%, as against 37% before the establishment of the State of Israel.

Demographically and sociologically there exists in Israel no greater antithesis than that between the Arab village and the collective agricultural settlement, the kibbutz. The birth-rate is extremely high in the Arab village, while it is very low in the kibbutz. The opposite is true of the cultural standards and the efficacy of educational and medical services for the child which, in the kibbutz, are exemplary measured not only by average Israel standards but also by those of the most progressive countries in the world. Care for the child is not considered a social service in the sense in which, in a community based on the principle of individual family unit and responsibility, separate functional agencies are responsible for "services", but is regarded rather as an integral part of the group and its community life.

The ideology underlying child care in the collective settlement exercises a much stronger influence on many aspects of child care in the whole community than would be explicable by the numerical strength of the collective settlements where only 7% of all Jewish children in Israel live. We cannot yet predict the future development of this unique social experiment, but its impact on the community in Israel cannot be exaggerated.

In this decisive period in the growth of the young State of Israel, however, the crucial question asked of every section of the community and its social services concerns their potential value in the absorption of immigrants and in the development of adaptable treatment facilities. In this respect, the collective settlements, now as in the past, fulfill an exceptionally important function by taking in thousands of immigrant children for whose maintenance and education the Youth Aliyah Department of the Jewish Agency is responsible. These children and adolescents are organized in groups under the leadership of specially trained instructor-teachers and house-mothers, have their own curriculum which is adapted to their educational background and includes studies and work (in different proportions according to age); although the emphasis is on preparation for agricultural life, pre-vocational training is being increasingly included. Many collective settlements have already been founded by graduates of Youth Aliyah and are in turn taking in new groups of immigrant children. We have already mentioned several problems which arise from the fact that today, in contra-distinction to the past, the parents of many of these children are in the country and that a large proportion come from relatively backward cultural environments. These changed conditions require, as we have said, many changes in the educational program and in the training of personnel. But the fact remains that the collective settlement may still be considered one of the most constructive instruments for the absorption and education of immigrant children.* (It is only fair to mention, in this connection, that, as regards the absorption of immigrant *families* in rural areas, villages are playing a much more important role than collective settlements.)

Unfortunately, ways have not yet been found to settle all immigrants immediately or shortly after their arrival in the country. Tens of thousands are still in transit-camps under primitive and in many respects

* Special chapters are therefore devoted, in this Guide, to the activities of Youth Aliyah and to the child in collective settlements.

unsatisfactory conditions. The number of children under the age of 18 who were living with their parents in these transit camps at the beginning of May 1950, was approximately 33,000 (or 37% of the total camp population as against 34% for this age group in the total settled population). Babies' homes, day nurseries and kindergartens are maintained in each of the 31 camps, and about 85% of all children under the age of 6 are cared for in these institutions whose functions are manifold: to improve the general state of health, to help in the formation and development of desirable habits, to teach the language, and, of most importance, to instruct the mothers in the essentials of proper child care.

No adequate solution has yet been found for the school-age and the adolescent groups in the camps. Schools are in operation but their program is not comprehensive enough, particularly with regard to pre-vocational and vocational training and leisure time activities. In these fields, the lack of trained personnel constitutes the main obstacle to the development of adequate educational and group work services. This lack of personnel becomes understandable when we take into consideration the variety of languages spoken by the immigrants and the multitude of cultural patterns in which they are living. The organization of social services for children and youth in the transit camps is still in the stage of experimentation, characterized by constant search for new and more appropriate methods of approach.

In the light of the many problems of child care in Israel which we have tried to analyze, one can easily assess the complexity of the task with which the other services, and particularly those of preventive and curative medical care, are faced. Until the beginning of mass immigration two years ago a steady improvement of general health conditions could be observed. The remarkable achievements of the Hadassah Medical Organization and the Health Service of the General Federation of Jewish Labour (Kupat Holim) in the field of preventive care are due mainly to the work of their maternity- and infant welfare centers and school hygiene departments. Needless to say that the importance of these instruments of preventive care has increased manifold now that the State is faced with the task of absorbing tens of thousands of immigrant children!

In addition, Hadassah for many years has been conducting a most effective campaign against trachoma and trichophytia, two diseases which, in the Orient, are to be considered phenomena of social pathology, and must therefore be combated by means of combined treatment-

and guidance measures related to the child itself and to all members of his family. Two years ago, trachoma and trichophytia had practically disappeared among the Jewish population. The influx of tens of thousands of immigrants from countries of extremely low hygienic standards, particularly North Africa and the Yemen, has caused their re-appearance, and treatment services had to be revived and intensified.

In the field of prevention and treatment of tuberculosis, the Anti-Tuberculosis League has rendered valuable service through detection of incidence, examinations, treatment, convalescence services and guidance. The organization would have been able to render much more effective service if it could have concentrated on preventive work exclusively; but because the Mandatory Government did not undertake any responsibility for hospitalization of TB patients, the League had to fulfill this State function — with the limited means of a voluntary agency. The Sick Fund of the Labour Federation also established clinical and hospital services for its health-insured members. But all these voluntary services were insufficient to cope with the vast problem of the steadily increasing number of tubercular patients, many children among them, who came from Europe after the war and are now coming from the Yemen and North Africa. The Joint Service for Medical Aid to Immigrants (formerly of Hadasah and Government, now of Government, the Jewish Agency and — partly — the Joint Distribution Committee) has undertaken responsibility for the medical care of tubercular immigrants. Recently, the Ministry of Health, with the help of the International Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign, has made arrangements for a general tuberculin testing and BCG vaccinations of all children and adolescents in Israel, which form an important part of the Government's over-all campaign against tuberculosis.

In the area of curative medical services mention should again be made of the extensive facilities offered by the Health Service (Kupat Holim) of the General Labour Federation to all children of insured members (comprising already over 50% of the total population) as well as of a number of voluntary medical organizations (among which Hadasah is the most important) and of governmental and municipal clinics and hospitals. In spite of intensive efforts on the part of the Ministry of Health, there is still a considerable deficit in the number of beds available for children, particularly for those suffering from tuberculosis and heart diseases. No less severe is the shortage of placement and treatment facilities for epileptic and psychotic children whose total number, however, is rather small. Physically handicapped (blind, deaf-

mute, crippled) children are cared for to some extent by a number of voluntary agencies, and plans are at present in preparation for the enlargement and intensification of therapeutic and educational services for these categories of children.

We have tried, in this short survey, to describe child care services in Israel as objectively as possible, their achievements as well as their limitations and deficiencies, at the same time analyzing realistically those factors to be borne in mind if we want to understand the special problems, the methods and the structure of social services in the young State. The chapters to follow contain more detailed information on the various aspects and fields of child care.

We are keenly aware of the fact that what we have achieved to date is not sufficient, especially in the light of the extraordinarily heavy need for child care in this historic period of the "ingathering of the exiles". We also know that many mistakes are being made under the tremendous pressure of the day-to-day demands, and that a partial solution is too often substituted for the ideal one.

What, then, are our chances of success in this up-hill struggle? Awareness of the problems and the ability critically to evaluate achievements are indeed important factors in the conduct of social service, but in themselves do not suffice to guarantee constructive development. Planning, financing, organizing and supervising the required services are the *sine qua non* of success, but here, too, they alone would not be enough to answer the thousands of questions arising out of the process of mass immigration. Ours is not only a material problem; it is, equally at least, one of spiritual and moral attitude.

Much has been said and written about the pioneer spirit of the early Jewish settlers in Palestine. They sacrificed their careers, their health and, often, their lives in order to turn swamps into fertile fields and colonies and sand-dunes into towns; they built settlements under the most dangerous conditions and defended them against marauders and armed aggression. These were the men and women who laid the foundation of the educational and cultural institutions in the country; who revived the Hebrew language; who established a now powerful labour federation with comprehensive health services, unemployment and old-age insurance schemes; who organized central and local authorities at a time when they had no governmental support; who established and developed the large voluntary agencies that today play such a vital role in the social services of Israel.

The pioneers of the early days, the heroes of self-sacrifice, have ever since remained the highest ideal of Jewish life in Israel and still give impetus and direction to its youth in war and in peace. It is due to this spirit that the absorptive capacity of the country was created and developed. And what now often seems an exclusively economic problem is still deeply rooted in the original pioneer ideology. If we succeed in our task, as we hope we shall, it will be due to the sacrifices of the early settlers, and to our efforts, in their spirit to find the answer to the urgent questions confronting us today.

